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STYLISTIC PARALLELS BETWEEN THE ASSYRO-BABYLONIAN AND THE OLD PERSIAN INSCRIPTIONS.

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The style of the Ancient Persian inscriptions often reflects the influence of the older Assyrian and Babylonian cuneiform texts. A brief statement of the most striking of these stylistic resemblances may be of interest both for Iranian scholars and for Assyriologists.¹ The parallels between the Assyro-Babylonian and the Old Persian inscriptions which are noted in this study are the more important since the tablets of the Achæmenians show almost no resemblance, either in style or in spirit, to the regal inscriptions of India, of which the oldest are those which were carved by order of Aśoka in the third century B. C.

Among the comparisons suggested in the present paper the most important are those which involve phraseology. But, for the sake of completeness, less significant resemblances, such as exhortations to uprightness, or invocations for heaven's blessing on the king, or descriptions of repairs to temples and of the construction of canals, and the like, have been cited, since, to the best of the present writer's knowledge, even these parallels, however natural they seem to be, exist only between the Assyro-Babylonian and the Old Persian inscriptions, and not between the Old Persian and the Indian tablets. It must not be supposed, however, that the Old Persian texts are a slavish imitation of the Assyro-Babylonian inscriptions. Many parallels may be drawn between the style of the Avesta and the style of the Old Persian monuments. Such comparisons have been made with great thoroughness by Windischmann, *Zor. Stud.*, pp. 121-5, and by Spiegel, *Éran. Alterthumsk.*, Vol. II, pp. 2, 3 (add also the parallelism between Dar. Elv. 1-4 and Ys. xxxvii, 1). They need not be

¹ In the present study reference is made to the editions of the Old Persian inscriptions by Spiegel (Leipzig, 1881) and by Weissbach-Bang (Leipzig, 1893), and the Babylonian version is quoted from the edition of Bezold (Leipzig, 1882). The Assyro-Babylonian texts are cited from the first three volumes of Schrader's *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek* (Berlin, 1889-92).

repeated here. Beside all this there are two remarkable points of similarity between the Old Persian inscriptions and the inscriptions of Aśoka which have been noted by Senart, *Inscript. de Piyadasi*, Vol. II, pp. 296, 297. The resemblance between the Old Persian phrase, unknown to the Assyro-Babylonian texts, *θātiy Dārayavauš xšāyaθiya* "saith Darius the king," Babylonian *Dari'amuš šarru ki'am iḫābi*, and the words of Aśoka, *Devānāmpiye Piyadasi lājā hevaṃ āha* "thus saith Priyadarśī, beloved of the gods, the king"—a formula which does not occur in any other Indian inscriptions, so far known—is very striking. Again, the use of the Babylonian *duppu* "tablet" in the inscriptions both of the Achæmenidæ and of Aśoka (Old Persian form *dipi*; cf. New Susian *tuppi*, Aśoka-inscriptions *dipi*, *lipi*, Sanskrit [frequent] *lipi*) is, as Senart says, noteworthy. Perhaps the French scholar is not far wrong in seeing in these two stylistic parallels "*une trace de l'influence exercée par la conquête et l'administration perses dans le nord-ouest de l'Inde*" (p. 297). It is just possible that with the Old Persian use of *θātiy* "saith" we may compare the phrase which recurs times without number in the Avesta, *āaṭ mraoṭ Ahurō Mazdā* "then spake Ahura Mazda."

The terms applied to the divine beings are very similar both in the Old Persian and in the Assyro-Babylonian inscriptions. As *Ašur* is "the great lord, the king of all the great gods" (*Šalmaneser II.*, Annal-inscription, 1, 2), so *Ormazd* is "a great god, the greatest of gods" (*Van* 1, 2; see also *Dar. Pers. d* 1, 2). The Hebrew phrase, "For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords" (*בְּיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וַיְהִי הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים*, Deut. 10:17), or "The Lord is greater than all gods" (*גָּדוֹל יְהוָה מִכָּל-הָאֱלֹהִים*, Exod. 18:11; cf. also Exod. 15:11; Pss. 82:1; 95:3; 97:7, 9, and consult C. de Harlez, "La religion persane" in *Révue de l'instruction publique en Belgique*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 6), is very similar.

In the Babylonian inscriptions the heavens and the earth are ruled by *Šamaš* and the great gods, and they have made the king great (*Tiglath-Pileser I.*, Prism-inscription, col. i, 7, 15–18). Similar to this is the might of *Auramazda*, "the great god, who created this earth, who created yon heaven, who created man, who created peace for man, who made Darius king, the one king of many, the one lord of many" (*Dar. Elv.* 1–12; see also *Sz. b* 1–3,

NR. *a* 1-8, Xerx. Pers. *a* 1-6, *da* 1-8, *ca* 1-5, Xerx. Elv. 1-11, Van 1-9, Art. Pers. 1-8; and *cf.* Bh. i, 11, 12 [Old Persian text numbers]).

One of the most common phrases in the Old Persian inscriptions is *vašnā Auramazdāha* (Babylonian *ina ṣilli*² *ša Ūrimizda*) "by the grace of Ormazd," which occurs forty-eight times. A similar idea is found repeatedly in the Babylonian and Assyrian texts. Šalmaneser II. (Monolith-inscription, col. i, 32, 33; *cf.* 44) conquered Aḫuni with the help (*ina tukulti*) of Ašur and the great gods, and Ašurbanipal (Annal-inscription, col. ii, 127-9) marched against Aḫširi, king of Mannai, at the bidding (*ina kibit*) of Ašur, Sin, Šamaš, Rammān, Bel, Nebo, Ištar, NIN-IB, Nergal, and Nusku (*cf.* also Tiglath-Pileser I., Prism-inscription, col. iv, 7; Ašur-našir-abal, Annal-inscription, col. i, 76, 77; col. ii, 25, 26).

Admonitions to right conduct are occasionally found in both sets of inscriptions. We may, for instance, compare with the Nebo-inscription 12 of Rammān-nirāri III., "O descendant, trust thou in Nebo, trust in no other god!" the words of Darius (NR. *a* 56-60): "O man, let not the command of Ormazd seem offensive to thee! leave not the right way! sin(?) not!" (*Cf.* the Babylonian version, l. 35.) It has already been stated that the inscriptions of Darius I., Xerxes I., and Artaxerxes III. regard Ormazd as the source of royal power. The same idea is found in Sargon (State-inscription, 3, 4), "Ašur, Nabū, and Marduk have given me an incomparable realm," while it was a god (Lugal-Mit-TU?) who made the kingdom of Šamšu-iluna great (inscription of Šamšu-iluna, col. iii, 1).

Both the Ancient Persian and the Assyro-Babylonian inscriptions contain prayers for the welfare and safekeeping of the monarch. Thus Nebukadnezar II. (Embankment-inscription, col. iii, 43-7) implores Nin-karrak: "Lengthen my days, establish my years, a gracious life, enjoyment of my strength be in thy mouth, prosper my soul, strengthen my body, guard my —, establish my seed." So, too, Xerxes prays: "May Auramazda with the gods protect me, and my kingdom, and my work" (Xerx. Pers. *da* 17-19; *cf.* Xerx. Pers. *a* 18-20, *b* 27-30, *ca* 12-15). With this supplication of Nebukadnezar we may compare the

² With the Babylonian *ṣillu* "shadow" as a translation of the Old Persian *vašna* "grace" compare the usage of the Hebrew שָׁלוֹם, *e. g.*, Ps. 91:1, where the Septuagint has σκέπη.

invocation of Darius: "May Ormazd bring me help with all the gods, and may Ormazd guard this land from an (invading) horde, from drought, from the Lie; may neither an enemy, nor an (invading) horde, nor drought, nor the Lie come to this land. For this boon I implore Ormazd with all the gods;³ this may Ormazd with all the gods grant me" (Dar. Pers. *d* 13-24; cf. NR. *a* 51-5; there is no corresponding inscription in Babylonian; cf. Weissbach, *Grundriss der iran. Philol.*, Vol. II, p. 64; Justi, *ibid.*, p. 427, Anm. 2). In the days of the later Achæmenians, Artaxerxes III. (Ochus) associated Mithra with Ormazd in his petition (Art. Pers. *a* 32-5).

The epithets assumed by the monarchs are quite similar in both sets of inscriptions. We read repeatedly in the Achæmenian texts of "the great king, the king of kings, king of lands, king of this earth(?)" (Bh. *a* 1-3, Babylonian text), (even) "king of lands of all tongues, king of this earth, great, (even) far hence" (Xerx. Pers. *a* 7, 8, Babylonian text). With the Ancient Persian phrase *xsāyaθiya xsāyaθiyānām*, Babylonian *šār šarrāni*,⁴ one involuntarily compares the phrase מֶלֶךְ מְלִכֵּי of Dan. 2:37. Tiglath-Pileser I. is "the mighty king, the king of hosts, incomparable, the king of the four quarters of the world, the king of all rulers, the lord of lords, the king of kings" (Prism-inscription, col. i, 28-30; cf. Ašur-nāšir-abal, Annal-inscription, col. i, 32-6). Asarhaddon furthermore declares himself to be "king of Assyria, overlord of Babylon, king of Šumir and Akkad" (Prism-inscription, A and C, col. i, 1-2), and once again, as Darius (Bh. i, 4-6, *a* 5-8), Artaxerxes Mnemon (Art. Sus. *a* 1-3), and Artaxerxes Ochus (Art. Pers. *a* 12-21) proudly recount their genealogies, so Ašur-nāšir-abal (Statue-inscription, 2, 3) and Šamaš-šum-ukīn (Cylinder-inscription, 18-23) give their lineage in full detail.

Of all the passages in which the style of the Old Persian inscriptions shows Assyro-Babylonian influence, perhaps the most striking is Bh. iv, 69-80. The Old Persian text is to be rendered as follows (the Babylonian version, Bh. 105-9, is too mutilated to repay quotation here):

³ On my translation of the Old Persian phrase *hadā viθaibiš багаibiš* by "with all the gods" rather than by "with the clan gods" see *JAOI*, Vol. XXI, Part II, pp. 181, 182.

⁴ The phrase "king (of Babylon and) of the lands" *šār (Babilu u) mātāti* in the Babylonian tablets of the time of Cyrus, Cambyes, Bardia, Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes is probably borrowed from the Old Persian style.

Saith Darius the king: Thou who hereafter shalt see this tablet which I wrote, or these figures, destroy them not; so long as thou livest, preserve them. Saith Darius the king: If thou shalt see this tablet or these figures, shalt not destroy them, and as long as (thy) house shall exist, shalt preserve them for me, may Ormazd be thy friend, and thy house be great, and mayest thou live long, and what thou shalt do, that may Ormazd magnify for thee. Saith Darius the king: If thou shalt see this tablet or these figures (and) shalt destroy them, and as long as (thy) house shall exist, shalt not preserve them for me, may Ormazd slay thee, and may thy house not exist, and what thou shalt do, that may Ormazd ruin for thee.

In the inscriptions of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings we find numerous examples of a similar idea whence the Old Persian phraseology was borrowed. On the reverse of the inscription of Rammân-Nirâri I. 9-43 we read thus:

For later times: When this city becomes old and decays, may a later prince repair its injuries, restore my tablet (and) inscription to its place. Then will Ašur hear his prayers. Whoso destroys my inscription and writes his own name (instead), and whoso removes my tablet, destines it to destruction, throws it in the flood, burns it with fire, sinks it in the water, covers it with earth, brings and puts it in —, a place of non-existence, and whoso sends for these accursed deeds(?) another enemy, a base foe, a hostile tongue, or anyone else, and takes away (the tablet), and whoso schemes and does aught, may Ašur, the exalted god who inhabits Îharsagkurkura, Anu, Bel, Ea, and Ištar, the great gods, the Igigi of heaven, the Anunaku of earth, seize him mightily with their hands, angrily curse him with an evil curse, destroy in the land him, his name, seed, his might, and family. May destruction of his land, annihilation of his people and his boundaries(?), proceed from their exalted mouth. May Rammân visit him with fearful rain, send on his land flood, evil wind, sedition, destruction, storm, oppression, famine, need, want(?), visit his land like a flood, make it rubble and fallow, may Rammân behold his land with the evil eye.

Many other passages of similar purport are found in the Assyro-Babylonian texts; *e. g.*, Prism-inscription of Tiglath-Pileser I., col. viii, 50-88; close of Monolith-inscription of Ašur-nâsir-abal, 45-103; Prism-inscription of Sanherib, col. vi, 63-73; Annal-inscription of Rassam-cylinder of Ašurbanipal, col. x, 108-20. Some of these Semitic inscriptions have the curse only without the blessing. Such are the second inscription of Pudi-ilu, 5-8; Cylinder-inscription of Sargon, 75-7; Nebukadnezar I., i, col. ii, 26-60; Merodach-Baladan II., col. v, 18-47. In one instance

the blessing only is recorded without the curse (great cylinder from Abû-Habba of Nabonid, col. iii, 43-51).

The sentiment in these imprecatory passages reminds one involuntarily of the famous epitaph on Shakespeare's tomb:

Good frend for Iesus sake forbear,
To digg the dust enclosed heare:
Blest be ye man ye spares thes stones,
And curst be he ye moves my bones.

Both the Assyro-Babylonian and the Achæmenian kings recount their restoration of temples and construction of canals. Darius repaired the temples of the gods⁵ (*bitāti ša ilāni*, Bh. 25; Old Persian *āyadanā*, Bh. i, 63) which Gaumates the Magian had destroyed, and Tiglath-Pileser I. "built the temple of Ištar of Ašur, my lady, the temple of Martu, the temple of the ancient Bel, the house of the divinity, temples of the gods of my city Aššur which were fallen to ruin, and completed them," etc. (Prism-inscription, col. vi, 86-90; see also col. vii, 60-114; Sargon, State-inscription, 137).

The building of canals is mentioned by Sanherib in the inscription of Bavian, 10-16:

I dug the water to the city Chadabiti, eighteen canals, and conducted it in the Chusur tributary. From the district of the city Kisiri to Nineveh I brought the canal. I let this water flow therein. I called its name Sanherib's Irrigation. I had before brought this body of water from the mountain Tas, a mighty range that lies on the border of Akkad, to my land. That canal, they called its name Canal —. Now, however, at the command of Ašur, the great lord, my lord, I added the water on the right and on the left of the range that bounds it (and? the water?) of the cities Mi—, Kuk—, Biturra, which were situated thereupon, in (a canal-bed of?) stones; [this canal?] I named Sanherib's Canal(?); above the — water and the former canal-bed which I had diverted, I conducted its course [into the Chusur-Canal?].

(See also the Canal-inscription of Nabopolassar, col. ii, 4-14.) With this inscription of Sanherib we may compare the tablet of Darius at Suez, in which the Persian king informs us: "I commanded to dig this canal from a river named Pirāva which flows in Egypt to the sea which goes from Persia. This canal was dug" (Sz. c 8-10. No Babylonian version of this inscription exists).

⁵ Cf. on this Windischmann, *Zor. Stud.*, p. 126, who notes that Darius uses the curiously similar phrase *בִּית־אֱלֹהִים* in his decree recorded in Ezra 6:7, and the present writer, *J.A.O.S.*, Vol. XXI, Part II, p. 180.

We may also note that much of the phraseology of the Old Persian descriptions of rebellions against the great king seems to have been borrowed from the Assyro-Babylonian texts. Tiglath-Pileser III. in Slab-inscription, 20, 21, says: "Sardaur(ri), of the land Urartu, revolted from me and plotted with Matian (Mati-ilu?). In the land Kišta(n) and the land Ḫalpi, a district of the city(!) Ḫummuh, I destroyed him even to annihilation." In like manner Sargon says: "Ḫanunu, king of Gaza, together with Sib'u, turtan of Egypt, came against me at Rapihi to deliver combat and battle. I defeated him" (State-inscription, 25, 26). With such passages we may compare Bh. ii, 43-6: "For a third time the rebels assembled and marched against Dādarši to give battle. There is a city named Uhyāma in Armenia. There they gave battle. Ormazd brought me help. By the grace of Ormazd my army smote that rebellious army mightily." (The corresponding Babylonian text, Bh. 51, 52, is much mutilated here. The Babylonian equivalent of the Old Persian phrase hamaranam čartanaïy "to make battle" is ana epêš(u) taḫaza, Bh. 49, 50, 54, 55.) A further parallelism exists between the Assyro-Babylonian and the Old Persian inscriptions in the account of tortures inflicted by the monarch upon captured rebels. Thus Ašur-nāšir-abal in his Annal-inscription, col. i, 116—col. ii, 1, says: "I took many men alive; I cut off the hands and arms(?) of some, the noses(?) and ears (and arms) of others; I put out the eyes of many men; I erected one pillar of living men, another of heads; on — trees in the district of their city I put up their heads; their boys and girls I burned in the fire." A few lines farther on in the same inscription we read: "I took twenty men alive, hanged them on the wall of his palace" (col. ii, 72). In a similar spirit Darius informs us in Bh. ii, 73-8: "Fravartiš was seized and brought to me; I cut off both his nose, and ears, and tongue, and put out his eyes; he was held bound at my door; all the people saw him; then I crucified him at Ecbatana, and the men who were his foremost followers, I hanged them within the citadel at Ecbatana." (The corresponding Babylonian text, Bh. 60, 61, is too much mutilated to repay quotation here.)

A few minor points of similarity between the style of the Old Persian texts and the inscriptions of the Assyro-Babylonian monarchs may be noted in conclusion. Among these come lists

of kings and of cities. Šamši-Rammân speaks of Ni-na-a A-di-a Ši-ba-ni-ba Im-gur-Bíl Iš-šib-ri Bît-im-dir-a Ši-mu Ši-ib-ṭī-niš Ud-nu-na Kib-šu-na Kur-ba-an Ti-du Na-bu-lu Ka-pa Ašur U-rak-ka Amat Ḫu-zi-ri-na Dûr-balaṭ Da-ri-ga Za-ban Lu-ub-du Arrapha Arba'ilu adi A-mî-di Til-abni Ḫi-in-da-nu, which are "in all twenty-seven cities" (naphar xxvii maḥazi, col. i, 45-50; cf. Rammân-Nirâri III., Slab-inscription, 2, 5-12). In a similar fashion Darius enumerates Pârsâ Uvaḫa Bābiruš Aθurâ Arabāya Mudrāya tyaiy drayahyâ Sparda Yaunâ Māda Armina Katpatuka Parθava Zaraḫa Haraiya Uvārazmiya Bāxtriš Suguda Gaḍāra Saka Ūata-guš Harauvatiš Maka, which are "altogether twenty-three lands" (fraharvam dahyāva xxiii, Bh. i, 14-17; the Babylonian rendering here, l. 7, is lost; cf. also Dar. Pers. e 10-18, NR. a 22-30. With this latter passage we may also compare the Prism-inscription of Tiglath-Pileser I., col. iv, 71-83).

Last of all there exists a parallelism, worth noting, although not altogether unknown before, between Xerx. Pers. a 6-9 and the apocryphal portion of Esther 3:13. The Old Persian text is rendered: "I am Xerxes, the great king, the king of kings, the king of lands of many races, the king of this great earth even afar" (cf. Babylonian version, 6-8). Closely parallel is the passage in the apocryphal Esther: βασιλεὺς μέγας Ἀρταξέρξης τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἕως τῆς Αἰθιοπίας ἑκατὸν εἰκοσιεπτὰ χωρῶν ἀρχουσι καὶ ποτάρχαις ὑποτεταγμένοις τάδε γράφει· πολλῶν ἐπάρξας ἐθνῶν, καὶ πάσης ἐπικρατήσας οἰκουμένης, ἐβουλήθην, κτλ. (cf. also with Old Persian šiyāti "peace," Dar. Pers. e 23, *passim*, the phrase in this same passage, τὴν ποθομένην τοῖς πᾶσι ἀνθρώποις εἰρήνην).⁶

The literary criticism of the Old Persian inscriptions is incomplete unless the influence which the Assyro-Babylonian tablets exercised over their style is taken into account. It is but natural that such an influence should have existed and that it should have been very strong. Yet the Achæmenian kings were not mere imitators. The spirit of the Old Persian texts is far

⁶ The inscription in Egyptian set up by Darius at Tell-el-Masxūṭah shows several stylistic parallels with the Old Persian texts (see the translation of the stele by Golénischeff, *Rec. de trav.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 106, 107). Thus, as "Ra put Darius on his throne," so "Ormazd made Darius king" (Sz. c 1-3). Not only is Darius, according to the stele, "(master) of all the sphere of the solar disc [i. e., the sphere traversed by the solar disc]," as he is "king of this great earth even to afar" (Sz. c 5, 6), but he is also "the great, the prince of princes, . . . the son of Hystaspes, the Achæmenian," both in the Egyptian and in the Old Persian texts (cf. Sz. c 5-7).

different from that which pervades the royal inscriptions of Babylonia and Assyria. Darius and his successors were too wise to ignore altogether phraseology which had been hallowed by many centuries of Semitic rule, but they were also too original to follow with absolute imitation the literary diction of another people. What was best for their purposes in their inscriptions the Achæmenian kings accepted; what was not suitable they laid aside, and with the fine combination of Semitic and of Aryan spirit the Old Persian inscriptions stand forth nobly among the oldest literary records of the Indo-Germanic race.